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THE
BELFAST MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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MAY, 31, 1811.

[Vol. 6.]

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

A SOCIETY has lately been established in Liverpool for bettering the condition and encreasing the comforts of the poor. The following report of a committee previous to the institution being established, develops some good observations on the best modes of assisting the poor, and points out some useful axioms in that branch of political economy, which is connected with the proper management of the poorer classes of society. The rules of the society are also subjoined, and also the first report of the society. The latter is enriched with some just remarks on that difficult science of relieving the poor with the least injury to themselves. In all plans for their assistance, the administering of present relief should be connected with a view to the amelioration of those vices, which too frequently accompany poverty.

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED IN APRIL, 1809, TO CONSIDER UPON THE BEST MODE OF ESTABLISHING A PERMANENT SOCIETY FOR BETTERING THE CONDITION AND INCREASING THE COMFORTS OF THE POOR.

"Your committee, after having paid the best attention in their power to the objects for which they were appointed, have prepared the rules which accompany this report, as the basis of a society for bettering the condition and increasing the comforts of the poor in the town and neighbourhood* of Liverpool.

"* By the neighbourhood, it is meant to include all persons residing within three miles of the town of Liverpool."

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"The inquiries which they have found it necessary to make, in order to form those rules, upon a foundation best calculated to attain the desired object, having placed within their immediate view many different plans which have been put in practice in several populous towns in the united kingdom, for the improvement of the condition of the poor, they take this opportunity of making a few remarks upon the good which may be expected gradually to arise from an institution of the proposed nature.

"And, in the first place, such a society will contribute to increase that mutual good-will and connexion which ought ever to subsist between the rich and the poor; it will draw closer those natural bonds of union which local circumstances may have already formed, and, while it serves to remind the highest of their duty, it will conduce to render the lowest satisfied with their condition.

"The sums of money annually expended in this country under the name of charity are almost beyond calculation. But how much of this becomes the reward of imposture; how much, with the best intention of doing good, is misapplied to the purposes of evil; how often does that pecuniary bounty, which was meant to wipe away the tears of distress, and to solace the miseries of indigence, fail in its object; and, instead of being productive of benefit to those very persons whom it was kindly intended to relieve, how often does it operate to their prejudice by furnishing them with the means of encouraging their propensities to idleness and vice; and by rendering

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them less frugal, less industrious, and less capable of maintaining their families by the exertions of honest industry. One great cause of the growing evil is obvious; the generality of persons are willing to give their money, but they will not give their time to the poor. It must therefore necessarily follow, that in such charity there can be little inquiry, and still less discrimination; and there cannot be a truer maxim than this, that it is not *what* is given, but the right application of it, which constitutes its real value. Here then a society of the proposed nature will prove itself particularly useful. It will convert benevolence to better purposes; it will direct it into better channels; it will teach that the true and legitimate object of charity is moral amendment; it will urge the necessity of regular habits, of prudent economy and of improvement of character; it will hold out the most powerful motives to exertion; it will direct its efforts to eradicate the seeds of evil, and advance the practice of virtue; and, whilst it endeavours to operate on the lower classes by individual encouragement, by the prospect of honestly acquiring property, and by every other incitement to industry and prudence, it will also point out to the rich the paths of active and useful beneficence.

"It is not necessary that your committee should enumerate the various objects which may ultimately be attained by an association like the present; they will gradually be developed with the progression of the plan. Your committee will, however, trespass a little longer upon your time, while they state what they would recommend for immediate adoption; and the grand basis of the plan, they conceive, should be inquiry and investigation. It appears to them essentially necessary to be-

come acquainted with the situation and character of the resident poor in the town and neighbourhood, before any very extended good can be expected to arise from the proposed institution. However difficult, and almost impossible, the accomplishment of this may at first view appear, your committee entertain not a doubt that the investigation, if properly conducted, will not only be practicable, but easy of attainment.

"By a skilful division of labour, by a selection of respectable individuals from that class of society, who, without being liable either to impose or be imposed upon, have the best means of acquiring a competent knowledge of the poorer classes, and by assigning to each such a portion as will not interfere with his own personal pursuits, your committee are confident that the desired end may, in a great measure, be obtained; and in this confidence the experience of the past fully justifies them. This knowledge, when once acquired, may be easily preserved; and the result of such a continued inquiry will point out the best remedy for those evils so justly complained of in the loose and indiscriminate charity of individuals. The progress of imposture will be checked; the distresses of the industrious poor will be pointed out and relieved; and idleness and vice will be detected and discouraged.

"The second object which your committee would recommend for immediate adoption is also one of the greatest importance. It is an undeniable truth, and it should never be forgotten as a maxim, 'that *one* shilling which the poor man earns does him more real service than *two* which are given him.' Upon this principle your committee would strongly urge the benefits which

would arise from the establishment of a general friendly society * under the trusteeship of the projected institution, and founded on correct principles of calculation. No measure could be devised more politic in its object, more practicable in its execution, or more permanent in its effects. By thus supplying the poor man with the means of making a prospective provision for himself and his family, you improve his character, you ameliorate his condition, and you preserve his independence. The great objection of the friendly societies already established is their insecurity. They are founded on incorrect calculations: with a view of encouraging subscriptions, they hold out the prospect of larger allowances in sickness than the contributions will justify; and the inevitable consequence is, their ultimate dissolution, and often their speedy bankruptcy. It has also not unfrequently happened that the treasurers have been false to their trust; and the sums of money spent at their club-meetings tend considerably to diminish the funds. With such disadvantages it cannot be a matter of surprise if the industrious poor man, who labours hard to save sufficient to pay his contribution, should be unwilling to trust his little all to a tenure so precarious; and the obvious benefits of a society, which, from the very nature of its constitution, precludes the possibility of internal discord, which dispenses its

allowances with strict impartiality, and facilitates the means of obtaining them; which, in short, offers such permanent security for the advantages it holds out, require no further illustration.

"The third measure which your committee would at present recommend is the building of *two* public kitchens, one in the northern, and the other in the southern part of the town. For (not to mention the additional expense, which is by no means trifling,) the great delay and inconvenience which have resulted upon former occasions, from the want of them, sufficiently prove the necessity of this measure; and though it is to be hoped that they will not be soon called for, yet in a town so extensive and so populous as Liverpool they never can be useless. The fluctuations of employment are at some periods great; during the long continuance of a hard frost many descriptions of the poor are thrown out of work; and in such cases the loss of time in necessary preparations entirely takes away from the value of relief, and the evil has reached its height before the remedy can be applied. Your committee would also recommend that a public shop should be attached to each of these, where the common necessities of life, such as flour, potatoes, coals, &c. should be sold to the poor for ready money only. Let it not be understood that they mean to recommend the articles being sold at a price below their value, nor even at prime cost. That would be a dereliction of the very principles upon which the society should, in their opinion, be founded. It has been ascertained as a fact, from actual investigation, that the poor pay an advanced price for the common necessities of life, at the rate of 25 per cent. beyond what the rich do; and, in addition to this, there is every

* "It would perhaps be more desirable to establish separate societies for males and females, as there are many instances in which the modes and seasons of relief will not apply equally to both. It is not, however, thought necessary, in the present report, to enter into the minutiae of the proposed measures: it was intended merely to elucidate general principles; the application of them must be left to the future committee who may be appointed to carry them into effect."

reason to suppose that they are also considerable losers in weight. The establishment of shops, therefore, where the poor might be supplied with these articles in small quantities at the same proportionate price which is given for large ones, cannot but be productive of great and lasting good. Your committee will illustrate their argument by an example. Canal coals, for instance, may be purchased by the load, at fifteen shillings per ton, or ninepence for the hundred: the poor man, who can only purchase them from week to week, as he receives his wages, can in no case procure them for less than one shilling the hundred, besides the loss in weight. This is undoubtedly a great hardship, and an adequate remedy would be productive of a twofold benefit; 1st, it would be a saving to the poor of *one fourth* of their wages, thus enabling them by their own industry to procure additional comforts for their families, and to lay by a small sum against the day of necessity. In the 2d place, it would improve their habits by requiring immediate payment. The facility with which the poor are enabled to contract debts is one very frequent cause of their ruin, and the instances were numberless during the last winter, in which they were prevented from participating in the general bounty, by a threat from their creditors of legal proceedings in the court of requests, whenever they ceased making their usual purchases, or were known to provide themselves with the articles furnished by the committee at reduced prices. Thus are they prevented from reaping the full enjoyment of their earnings, and labour loses its reward. An objection has been raised against the establishment of public shops, upon the ground of the injury which might result to the petty shop-keep-

ers who maintain themselves by the sale of the necessities of life in small quantities to the poor. But this objection ought not to have any great weight; for it often happens that the credit given to the poor is the cause of failure to the tradesman. Allowing it, however, to be well-founded, yet surely there can be no hesitation in adopting a plan productive of such essential comforts and advantages to the many, whilst the few who suffer are small indeed in the balance. Besides the principle itself is erroneous! for if once admitted, there is no improvement which it would not be the means of obstructing. When, in addition to this, it is considered that these shopkeepers charge enormous profits, that they furnish very inferior articles, and that there is a great deficiency in the weight, the objection must, by every reflecting mind, be dismissed as totally invalid.*

"These, then, form the leading objects which your committee would recommend for adoption upon the first formation of a society for bettering the condition and increasing the comforts of the poor. Others of equal importance will, in the course of time, unfold themselves. But it is above all things necessary to caution the public, both rich and poor, from expecting too great and rapid a progress. The seed must be a long time buried in the ground, before we can look for a plentiful harvest. True benevolence must be guided by the hand of experience before its benefits can be extensively felt. Its current is like the quiet and placid stream, which spreads fertility through the surrounding country, in its slow and silent course.

* For a more extended and complete answer to this objection which has been urged against the establishment of public shops, see reports of the London society for bettering the condition of the poor.

If, however, in a work which is interesting to all, only part of the object be attained, it will be labour well applied; and your committee cannot close their report, without expressing their hopes that the proposed society may meet with that support of which, from a conviction of its usefulness, they think it so well deserving; and that long after its projectors have slept in peace, it may still survive and flourish, dispensing its blessings, encouraging the growth of every virtue, and promoting the happiness of mankind.

JAMES GERARD,
PUDSEY DAWSON,
JONA. BROOKS,
J. BOSTOCK,
J. BRANCKER."

LAWS OF THE INSTITUTION.

I. THAT the general object of the society be to collect information respecting the circumstances of the poor, and to put in practice the most effectual means of ameliorating their condition. And as it has been found impossible, notwithstanding the large sums bestowed, to relieve all the distress that occurs in this large town, it appears desirable that particular attention should be paid to every reasonable plan of economy, so as to extend the benefits of charitable institutions to as great a number as possible. That the society ever keep in view the principle that the best relief the poor can receive is that which comes from themselves; and that the most effectual method of improving their condition is by the encouragement of industry and prudence.

II. That the business of the society shall be transacted by a committee of twenty-one members.

III. That every person subscribing ten guineas or upwards at one time, or one guinea or upwards an-

nually, be eligible as a member of the committee, and be entitled to one copy of all the publications of the society.

IV. That the committee be chosen by the subscribers at their first general meeting, and that they continue to act until the 4th of December, 1812, when seven of the number shall go out by lot, and the committee shall recommend the names of fourteen gentlemen to the annual meeting for the choice of the subscribers, (such recommendation, however, not to be binding;) the following year, seven of the former members shall go out, and seven new committee-men be chosen in like manner; and afterwards the remaining seven of the committee shall go out by rotation, after having served three years; such service, however, shall not render any person ineligible for the succeeding year, if the subscribers should think proper to re-elect him.

V. That a president, two vice-presidents, a treasurer, and secretary, shall be appointed annually by and out of the committee.

VI. That the ordinary meetings of the committee be held on the last Friday in every month, at eleven o'clock precisely, or on such day and hour as the committee may adjourn to.

VII. That the secretary (with the consent of the president) may call a special meeting, giving one day's notice; but that no business shall be transacted at such committee, excepting that which shall have been notified in the summons.

VIII. That the attendance of five members at least be necessary to form a committee.

IX. That any member being absent for three successive monthly meetings, without assigning any satisfactory reason, shall vacate his seat.

X. That all vacancies in the com-

mittee be filled up by ballot at monthly meetings only, a week's previous notice having been given to each member of the committee, and the person so elected shall be considered as the substitute of the person whose place he fills in the committee.

XI. That all questions be decided by a majority of votes, the chairman having also the casting vote.

XII. That this committee be empowered to correspond with any other society having a similar object in view, to purchase any books which are calculated to give them information on the subject, and to print any plan or report which they may think deserving of public attention.

XIII. That the committee be also empowered to offer such rewards for good conduct as the state of the funds will admit, so as to awaken the attention of the poor to what will promote their best interests; that they appoint such officers with salaries as they may think necessary, and apply the funds of the society in such a manner as shall seem to them most conducive to the public good.

XIV. That all drafts or orders for payment on account of the society, be made by order of the committee and entered on the minutes of the day; and that they be signed by three of the members present, and countersigned by the chairman or secretary.

XV. That a select committee be appointed every month, consisting of three members, (two of whom may act,) who shall meet once a week for the better dispatch of the regular business of the society, and shall report their proceedings to the general committee; but no orders of this committee shall be binding beyond the month, unless confirmed by the general committee.

XVI. That sub-committees be ap-

pointed (consisting of two or more members) for such purposes, and with such powers as the committee may think fit to delegate to them.

XVII. That the mayor and acting magistrates, the rectors, churchwardens of the parish, and principal overseer of the poor, be considered as honorary members of the committee.

XVIII. That a general meeting of the subscribers shall be held on the first Monday in December in every year, to inspect the accounts, and transact the general business of the society.

XIX. That a report of the state of the society be published every year, as soon as convenient after the general meeting.

XX. That no repeal of any fundamental law shall take place, except at the annual meeting of the subscribers, one week's previous notice having been given to each member of an intention to propose such repeal.

XXI. That no person shall be considered as a member of the society whose subscription is more than six months in arrears.

XXII. That when any money shall be placed out at interest, the stock shall be purchased and the security taken in the name of the trustees for the time being; and that when any purchase of land or buildings or any other property shall be made, such property shall be conveyed to the said trustees in trust for the society; and the trustees shall, from time to time, when requested by the committee, execute powers of attorney for receiving the dividends and interest as the same shall become due half yearly; and for receiving or recovering the principal money, or any part thereof, to such person or persons only as the committee for the time being shall by writing under the hand of

their chairman direct : and also shall execute any conveyance of such land or buildings or other property as the committee may direct. But the trustees, respectively, shall not be answerable nor accountable for involuntary losses, nor one for the other, nor for the acts or defaults of each other, but each person for himself alone.

XXIII. That it shall at any time be in the power of the committee for the time being to remove any trustee who shall neglect or refuse to perform the duties prescribed by the foregoing rule.

XXIV. That when any vacancy occurs by removal, resignation, or death, the committee shall, within the space of three months from such vacancy, proceed to the appointment of a new trustee, selected from among their own number.

REPORT OF THE SOCIETY.

YOUR committee, since their appointment, have been employed in making the preparations necessary for reducing to practice the measures recommended in the printed report of the select committee, and in facilitating the attainment of the other objects of the society ; and they now present you with the following report of their progress.

In order to obtain that KNOWLEDGE OF THE STATE OF THE POOR which seems so necessary to the future prosperity of the society, they have divided the town into TEN districts, over each of which two members of the committee have been appointed as superintendants ; under their direction, it is intended to select a number of visitors in proportion to the population of the several districts, to whom this part of the business of the society will more immediately be entrusted, and from whose information the condition, employment,

habits of life, and general character of the labouring poor may be accurately known. This investigation is for the present deferred, because if it had been instituted at this season of the year, expectations of pecuniary relief might have been raised in the minds of the poor, which must have been disappointed ; early in the spring it is the intention of the committee to commence this important inquiry upon a regular system, and to perpetuate the information so obtained by half yearly or quarterly reports from the visitors of each division.

The second object of the society was the establishment of a FRIENDLY SOCIETY, upon such a basis and under such regulations as to prevent the abuses and correct the errors and miscalculations which have proved ruinous to so many institutions of this kind.

To this the committee have not been inattentive ; a set of rules have been drawn up and submitted to the inspection of Mr. Morgan, secretary to the equitable assurance office in London, which have been returned by him with a letter expressing his entire approbation of them, and generously refusing to accept of any remuneration for his services. It now only remains to take the most proper measures for encouraging the poor to become members, and to this object the committee will turn their immediate attention.

To give effect, as early as possible, to the third measure so earnestly recommended, your committee have to report, that they have purchased two lots of ground, one in Bridgewater-street, the other in Marlborough-street, near Marybone, for the purpose of erecting thereon two PUBLIC KITCHENS, with SHOPS contiguous to them ; the plans for these premises have been submitted to the inspection of the committee, and

approved by them; considerable progress has been made in the erection of one of the buildings, and preparations are making for the immediate erection of the other.

Your committee have now informed you of the progress which they have made in the prosecution of the several plans first recommended to your attention. Before they close this, their first yearly report, they would state to you what objects may as they conceive, be reasonably held in view in that investigation of the circumstances of the poor of which they have spoken in the first page, and which was amongst the plans recommended to the society, in the report to the select committee in December, 1809. They have wished to define these objects as accurately as possible to themselves, and they are especially anxious that no misunderstanding should invade the public mind on this subject. Perhaps, they may best introduce the exposition of those objects by a statement of the questions with which they purpose to furnish their visitors.

- 1st, What is your name and age?
- 2d, Are you married or single, a widow or widower?
- 3d, What number of children have you, and what is the age of the eldest and youngest?
- 4th, What employment do you follow?
- 5th, What are your weekly earnings?
- 6th, With whom do you work?
- 7th, Do you and your family attend any place of public worship, when, and what?
- 8th, Do your children attend any school, how often, and what school?
- 9th, Have your children had the small pox, or cow pox?
- 10th, Is your habitation comfortable, clean, and healthy?
- 11th, Is there any infectious dis-

order in your house, or near it, and what? small pox, measles, or fever?

12th, Are you in want of relief, and why?

13th, Do you receive relief from your parish, or from any charitable institution, and what?

14th, Where were you born, where been in service, or worked as a labourer?

15th, How long have you resided in Liverpool?

16th, Who is your landlord, and how long have you lived in this house?

17th, Do you belong to any benefit society, and what do you receive?

One object which the committee have in view, in pressing some of the above stated questions, is, that preparation may be made for a judicious distribution of relief, in the event of the recurrence of such a season as the winter of 1808-9. On that occasion, many of the visitors were much embarrassed in their operations from want of a satisfactory knowledge (a knowledge not, on that emergency, to be obtained) of the characters and circumstances of many of those who applied for assistance. But it is not merely to a season of *unusual* distress that your committee look. They have it constantly impressed upon their minds that the great object of your association is to produce a *permanent* improvement in the state of the poor; and it is obvious that many of their questions have a contemplation distinct from that of the mere lessening of *temporary* suffering.

They conceive that by making themselves largely acquainted with the state of the poorer classes they may best ascertain to themselves in what directions their efforts may be most happily made. It is possible that, in the result of their in-

vestigation, modes of misery may be brought to light of the *existence* of which they have now no knowledge; and that some evils which are known to exist may be shown to have attained a *magnitude* of which they have, at present, no conception. In such cases, it will be a part of their duty to consider, whether the evils disclosed are such as it may lie within their power to remove or lessen.

They wish it distinctly to be understood, that it does not form a part of their purpose to give *pecuniary* assistance.* It is possible, however,

* It is proper, however, to remark that three plans have been under the consideration of the committee, (although not as yet determined upon,) the prosecution of which would imply the imparting of *money* to the poor: *First*, a plan of distributing pecuniary rewards to such persons as should have brought up a certain number of children without aid from the parish; *Secondly*, a plan of establishing a bank for the reception of small sums from the poor, the committee engaging to pay *interest* for the sums so deposited; and, *Thirdly*, a plan of *lending* small sums (say £2, or £3.) to poor persons, to be re-paid by instalments, a respectable housekeeper being guarantee for the re-payment of a part.— On the last plan they would remark, that besides possessing, in common with the *second*, the advantage of habituating the poor to *lay by* a part of their earnings, it carries with it the following recommendations:— 1st, That the security given by the housekeeper is in itself as good an attestation as can be desired to the *character* of the person soliciting assistance; and, 2dly, That the plan would, in many instances, happily co-operate with the shop-institution, spoken of in page 351, inasmuch as it may be presumed, (and the experience of the visitors of 1808-9 confirms the idea,) that many persons who might be *disposed* to adopt the plan of buying for ready money at a low price would be *prevented* from adopting it, by the debts under which they might lie to shop-keepers. A small sum by way of *loan*, to be re-paid by easy instalments, would release them from the incumbrance, and would give an auspicious elasticity to their future industrious efforts.

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that their investigation may disclose many evils, towards the removal of which they may be instrumental without the giving of money to the sufferers. Should it appear, for instance, that many of the children of the poor are without the blessings of education, your committee may fairly exert themselves towards the obtaining of those advantages for them. Should it appear that, spite of the facilities afforded for the cow-pox inoculation, there are many poor families who hesitate to adopt it, your committee may then fairly consider, whether there be any *uncoercive* means by which *they* may become instrumental (under providence) in propagating a practice which promises so well for the happiness of mankind. Should it be found (and your committee apprehend that, with respect to females especially, it would be found) that there are many persons, who, however *well disposed to be industrious*, cannot obtain employment, it may then become a just matter of consideration with your committee, whether some new modes of employment may not be devised, by which such persons may be enabled to earn their bread. Your committee have reason to believe that there are in this town many poor and industrious persons from distant parishes to whom a little parochial relief would be important, who are prevented from applying to this parish by a fear of being sent home; and from applying to their own parishes by fear, or hopelessness, or an ignorance of the just mode of proceeding. To such persons your committee conceive that they may be useful, by making application to their parishes (the merits of the cases having been previously ascertained) for a stipend to be remitted to the persons in question, so that these persons may have the benefit

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of parochial aid, without being compelled to leave a place in which their industry may be exerted to the greatest advantage.

Your committee think also that, by collecting accounts of the characters and circumstances of the poor, they may render the society's office a just receptacle of information for those who wish to obtain honest and industrious labourers or servants. Should this object of their hope be realized, it may then become a matter of desire among the poorer classes to have a well established character on the society's books.

Your committee have now stated some of the modes in which they conceive they may be useful in consequence of the information which may be drawn forth by their questions. It is evident that some few of their questions have purely a statistical tendency, *i. e.* they look to the ascertaining of the *general history* (*viz.* the birth-places, &c.) of the poor of this town. Such questions they have thought it fit to insert in their catalogue. They assist in giving *completeness* to the view which they are taking of the poor of Liverpool; and this completeness of view may be necessary to enable them to reason justly concerning the probable effect of institutions which have the welfare of the poor for their object.

They hope they may not be charged with *aiming at too much*. They are, indeed, proceeding with caution, *feeling their way*. They wish their objects to be as definite as possible. Even then they are not confident as to their power of accomplishing them; but if they accomplish a part only, they will do better than those who sit still and make no effort because they cannot achieve all. The only danger is, according to their apprehension, that many who belong not to your association, and e-

ven the more inactive members of the association itself, may satisfy themselves that the *agents of the society* are to do every thing, and, therefore, that *they*, in their respective stations, are released from all obligation to charitable effort. Alas! your committee can hope to remove but a *portion* of the evil existing in this town. Whilst they shall be exerting themselves even with their utmost energy, there will be ample scope for the benevolent activity of individuals. The efforts of one are not meant to supercede those of the other. They may go on most happily in unison.

Fully aware, therefore, of the difficulty of the duty they are engaged in, even under the most favourable circumstances, and contemplating, with no little apprehension, the limited state of their funds, and the very few names that have been added to the list of subscribers since the first general meeting, they dare not indulge any high expectations themselves, nor mislead the promoters of the objects of this institution by false hopes of that success which must ultimately depend upon the patronage of the public. The committee have cheerfully devoted their time and labour to the formation of this establishment, and will continue their exertions with increased diligence, if they shall receive that countenance and support which alone can ensure success in the attainment of the various objects of this important institution.

The present deplorable state of the commerce of these kingdoms must be felt and lamented by all. These evils, as they lessen the means, will increase our exertions to support the strength and prosperity of our country, which, whether the whole or its parts be considered, consists in a populace vigorous, virtuous, and enlightened. The labourers are the hands of the

merchant, the implements of the manufacturer and the agriculturist; a source of wealth in peace, and our defence in war. In the hour of danger they keep the enemy from our coast and "*stand a wall of fire around our loved isle.*"

Such are the public spirit and benevolence of the inhabitants of this town, that appeals to excite the passions have been unnecessary; RELIEF has always met DISTRESS, and they have been as ready to give as to receive

Some objections have been stated to the organization of the Laws of this Institution, which have much retarded its progress: great pains have been taken to obviate them, particularly as they came from gentlemen highly respectable, and warm friends to the poor. It is hoped they no longer exist, and that if the present members of the Society will lay the state of the funds before their friends, and explain their views, all will unite, with one heart and one soul, in this

LABOUR OF LOVE.
Liverpool, February, 1811.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

SERAPH; OR VANITY REPROVED.

(Concluded from page 274.)

WHEN her step-mother found fault with her, she never dared to justify herself, or speak a word in reply; this would have been reckoned the height of disobedience; she was therefore obliged to bear all in silence, though often, her heart was ready to burst.

Little Seraph was the first who seemed to sympathize in Harriet's sufferings, and in some degree to resent her injuries.

If she chanced to be seated on her mamma's lap, when the storm began, she immediately left it, and

walking over to her sister, placed herself close beside her, with her face turned towards her mamma; there she stood firm, endeavouring as it should seem, to ward off the fury of the tempest from its object, or at least determined to bear a part of it.

If she saw Harriet much affected, she climbed on her chair, and got her arms round her neck, and if a tear strayed down her sister's cheek, she immediately kissed it off. Sometimes she was ordered away from her sister; then she would, without saying a word, walk with a firm step to that part of the room which was farthest from her mother, and remain there till peace was restored. But never did these two exemplary sisters mention their mother's cruelty, either between themselves, or to any other person, nor utter one disrespectful word of her. It seemed, that without having spoken their thoughts to each other, both had determined to be silent on the disagreeable subject for ever.

Captain Lancaster saw that his wife did not love his daughter, but he had no conception of the misery she suffered in consequence of her step-mother's dislike; and Harriet would have died rather than let him know any thing that might cause him uneasiness.

Time therefore rolled on without bringing any diminution to the sufferings of Harriet; on the contrary, every year encreased her step-mother's enmity towards her. The diabolical passion of jealousy produced the most baleful effects in the mind of Mrs. L. she grew passionate, vindictive, and revengeful.

An incident occurred about this time, which though trifling in itself, we cannot pass over in silence, on account of the serious consequences produced by it.

There was in the family an old